

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 ORM-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12 PPT-01 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02

VO-03 SSM-03 A-01 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00 SY-05 AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9180

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

CONFIDENTIAL DAMASCUS 5486

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: FURTHER INFORMATION ON BORDER RESTRICTIONS

REF: DAMASCUS 5413

1. MUSLIM AUH DRIVER TOLD EMBOFF AUGUST 17 THAT HE ENTERED SYRIA SAME DAY BY HAVING HIS NAME ADDED TO LIST DRAWN UP AT ZAHLE GOVERNORATE. NO SEPARATE PERMIT WAS ISSUED. HE SAID OTHER NAMES ON LIST ALL APPEARED TO BE CHRISTIAN.

2. DRIVER'S ASSERTION SUPPORTED BY EVIDENCE FROM EMBASSY CONSULAR SECTION, WHICH REPORTED SOME LEBANESE IV APPLICANTS HAVE MANAGED TO ENTER SYRIA SINCE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON STRENGTH OF PERMITS ISSUED BY GOVERNOR OF ZAHLE. AS FAR AS CAN BE DETERMINED, IV APPLICANTS HAVE ALL BEEN CHRISTIAN.

3. BRITISH MILATT TOLD AT BORDER AUGUST 17 THAT INDIVIDUALS WHO PRESENT DIPLOMATIC IDENTITY CARD SHOWING THEY RESIDENT IN EITHER LEBANON OR SYRIA WILL BE PERMITTED

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TO ENTER SYRIA WITHOUT FURTHER DOCUMENTATION. HE

ADDED THAT TWO AMCITS ON REGULAR PASSPORTS TOLD HIM AT BORDER THEY HAD BEEN THERE FOR PAST TWO DAYS AND THAT CABLE FROM DAMASCUS MFA WOULD BE REQUIRED TO FACILITATE THEIR ENTRY. (AMBASSADOR, WHO ASKED NEW MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADI FOR CLARIFICATION OF BORDER REGULATIONS AT MEETING 1100L AUGUST 18, DREW BLANK. ADI SEEMED GENUINELY PERPLEXED BY WHOLE ISSUE AND FINALLY CONFESSED HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT REGULATIONS BEING IMPLEMENTED BY SARG BUT WOULD ADVISE ASAP.)

4. RELIABLE LOCAL PALESTINIAN TOLD US PALESTINIANS, AS WELL AS SYRIANS AND LEBANESE, WHOSE IDENTITY CARDS STATE THEY BORN IN PALESTINE BEING REFUSED PERMITS TO DEPART SYRIA FOR LEBANON.

5. COMMENT: CONFUSION SURROUNDING TRAVEL OF FOREIGNERS BETWEEN SYRIA AND LEBANON NOT YET CLARIFIED BY SENIOR SARG OFFICIALS. BRITISH MILATT'S UNEVENTFUL CROSSING PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATES HIS ASSERTION THAT RESIDENT DIPLOMATS WILL BE ABLE TO MOVE ACROSS BORDERS. BASED UPON AVAILABLE EVIDENCE, CHRISTIANS FIND IT EASIER TO ENTER SYRIA THAN DO MUSLIMS. RESTRICTIONS REGARDING PALESTINIANS SUGGEST THEIR TRAVEL WILL BE STRICTLY REGULATED.

MURPHY

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